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S E R M O N

Preached before the
Incorporated SOCIETY

F O R T H E

*Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts;*

A T T H E I R

A N N I V E R S A R Y M E E T I N G

I N T H E

Parish-Church of St. Mary-le-Bow;

On Friday the 17th of February, 1720.

By EDWARD WADDINGTON, D.D. K

Fellow of Eton College, and Chaplain in Ordinary to
His Majesty.

L O N D O N,

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near West-Smithfield, 1721.

February 17. 1720.

*At a Meeting of the Society for the
Propagation of the Gospel
in Foreign Parts.*

ORder'd, That the Thanks
of the Society be given
to the Reverend Dr. *Wadding-*
ton, for his Sermon preached
before the Society this Day;
and that he be desired to
Print the same.



David Humphreys, Secretary.



LUKE XXII. Ver. 32.

The latter Part of the Verse.

*---And when thou art Converted,
strengthen thy Brethren.*



THESE Words were spoken by our Blessed Saviour to St. Peter, immediately after he had given him and the rest of the Apostles Warning of the great Danger they were all in at this Time from their spiritual Enemy the Devil. And were directed to him more particularly, not (as some would perswade us) on account of any Supremacy he had over his Brethren,

but because of the much greater Danger he was in than any of the rest, of doing a very wicked and ungrateful thing to his *Lord and Master*; no less than the denying him openly *to be so*; or that he had ever been with him, or knew any thing of him: For thus the following part of *St. Peter's History* in this Chapter explains what our Blessed Saviour here meant, (with a particular Regard to him) in those remarkable Words immediately before the Text;
Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have
you, (it is in the Original ὑμᾶς, all of
you) that he may sift you as Wheat: But
I have prayed for you, (you Peter in
particular, because yours is the most
extraordinary Case) that your Faith
fail not.

Ver. 31,
 32.

ἐξ ἡμῶν.

Upon which Passage, I shall only farther observe at present, that what we here translate *desired*, is a much stronger Expression in the Original, and implies rather a Demand of Justice than a Request of Favour; and so it has all along been interpreted by Christian Writers:

Writers: But yet in neither Sense are we to suppose, that any such Thing was actually done by Satan to our blessed Saviour; but this is only a figurative Way of Speech, to signify the Restraint that Evil Spirit is always under, from the Power and Goodness of God, who will not suffer him at all Times to do that Mischief in the World, he is ever ready and inclined to do; or to represent in General, his Eagerness of Spirit, and the Pleasure the great Tempter of Mankind takes, in deluding unguarded Souls, and leading them captive at his Will; and to intimate to us in particular, that the prevailing by his Craft and subtle Insinuations over such eminent Persons as our Saviour's Apostles, and St. Peter in particular, would be a Matter of exceeding Joy and Triumph to him; who as he probably enough knew, or at least feared, that our Saviour's Coming into the World was intended to drive him out of it; that the Kingdom of the Messiah was to be erected

Tertullian, Cyprian, &c.

on the Ruines of the Kingdom of the Prince of the Air; and as the one *increased*, the other was to *decrease*; so he was now using all his Stratagems and cunning Devices, to defeat this glorious Design for the Good of Mankind, and to preserve still his own usurped Empire in the World, over the Souls and Bodies of Men. And as it is more than probable, that he had this Project in his View when he tempted our Blessed Saviour himself to sin against God, by distrusting his Care and Providence over him, and by falling down and worshipping him; so he continued still, notwithstanding his Defeat there, to make the same Efforts upon his more immediate Disciples, especially upon one of his most zealous Apostles, as having yet Hopes that he might thereby put a Check at least, to this growing Empire of the Messiah, which threatned such total Ruin and Destruction to his own; and therefore he watched an Opportunity (when this great Apostle was most likely to be

be off his Guard, and upon many Accounts least able to resist) to tempt him to the Commission of a Sin, which, if not speedily repented of and forgiven, would have rendred him at least unable to go on with the great Work of Publishing and Propagating the Gospel of Christ, that *Power of God* Rom. i. 16. unto Salvation: And his unhappy Denial of his Master (if finally persisted in) might, in the Event, have been a fatal Discouragement to any other Persons to undertake the same Business. All which Mischief our Blessed Saviour in his infinite Knowledge foreseeing, did, by an exceeding Act of Goodness and Wisdom, kindly interpose and prevent. And tho' Satan had thus *desired*, or *demande*d of our Saviour, to have St. Peter in particular left to him, that he might sift him as Wheat; and tho' he permitted him to vex and toss him like Wheat in a Sieve, by a strong and wicked Temptation; yet he would not let him have such *full* Power over him, as that he should execute his Design upon

upon him to the uttermost; but, as he tells our Apostle in the next Verse, *he prayed to his Father that his Faith might not fail*, that is, that it might not *utterly fail*, so as that he should fall without ever rising again. For, let the Writers of the Church of *Rome* say what they will against it, in Favour of their Pope's Infallibility, as the unerring Successor of *St. Peter*, the Event plainly shewed, that his Faith did so far fail at this Time, as that it gave Way to his Fear, till he had actually denied his Master in the most positive and solemn Manner. But as he immediately repented of what he had done, (which Repentance was, no doubt, the gracious Effect of our Saviour's Prayers for him) so his Faith quickly broke forth again, like the Light of the Sun issuing out with greater Splendour from under a dark Cloud; and was ever after so eminently strong and steady, that it carried him through much greater Trials and Difficulties than this was, and ever made him more than Conquerour over
all

all the Temptations of Satan, and the Powers of Darkness.

But as all this was owing to the free Goodness and tenderest Compassion of his blessed Master, so our Saviour thought it necessary, even *now*, as well as after his Resurrection *upon another* Joh. xxi. 15, &c. *Occasion*, to let him know what Use he ought to make of so much Kindness shewed to himself, in his future Behaviour towards his Brethren, and the rest of Mankind: And therefore, after he had told him of his *Danger*, and hinted plainly enough to him his *Fall*, and what would nevertheless be the happy Issue of *both* at last, he immediately subjoins the Words of the Text, as a very natural Inference from the whole; *And when thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren.*

(a) [And here again the most zealous Advocates for the Papal Tyranny are hard at Work, tho' differently affected

B

with

(1) This Paragraph was omitted in Speaking, but is thought fit to be printed, for the fuller Explication of the Text, and Manifestation of the Arts used by the Writers of the Church of *Rome*, to pervert Scripture to their own Purposes.

with two Words in this remarkable Passage. For, *First*, (b) they are very uneasy at the Word *converted*, and labour much to make it a meer Hebraism; as if our Saviour had only said, do thou hereafter *in like Manner*, or in thy Turn, *strengthen thy Brethren*. And this they do very probably, because they would not have it thought that St. Peter (and we well know for whose Sake they are so ready to clear him) stood in Need of any proper Conversion. And some others, particularly *Grotius* (c), have, I think, gone too far in favouring this Interpretation on Criticisms that will not bear a strict Examination. But then, *Secondly*, they are even transported with Joy at the Word *strengthen*, as if it necessarily implied Supremacy, Dominion, and Infallibility in the Bishop of Rome, as the alone Successor of St. Peter, and the undoubted

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(b) See *Bellarmino*, *Maldonate*, &c.

(c) See *Grotius* on the Place; and some of the *Fratres Poloni* go this way; as *Wolzogenius* and *Brenius*. See this Interpretation examined and confuted, in *Gerhardi Harm. Evang.* pag. 867.

Possessor of his extraordinary Gifts, and as if no one could *strengthen* his Brethren but an uncontrollable and infallible Teacher. Whereas] the plain and only Meaning of the Words is this: *When thou art converted*, that is, when thou hast seen thy Fault in Denying me, and hast repented of it; and hast escaped the Snares that were laid for thee by the great Enemy of Mankind, through my Goodness to thee, consider what a Blessing thou hast received thy self, and be ever ready and diligent to shew the same Kindness to thy Brethren, the rest of the Apostles, or to others, as there is Occasion, that I have shewed to thee: Confirm the Weak, establish the Wavering, receive the Penitent, and give me this farther Proof of the Sincerity of thine own Conversion, by doing to others as I have done unto thee. *Go and do thou likewise.* This then being the true and full Meaning of the Words, as they relate more immediately to St. Peter, I shall pursue them no farther in that View; but take Occasion from his

particular Case, and our Blessed Saviour's well-grounded Advice upon it, to advance this more general Proposition, viz. That it is the Duty of all those, who have received such Blessings, of what kind soever, from the Hands of God, as they find themselves exceeding happy in the Enjoyment of, and which they are sensible their Brethren still want, and can never be truly happy without, to do all they can to make them also Partakers of the same: This is what I shall endeavour,

First, To make out to you by proper Arguments. And then,

Secondly, Apply the General Proposition to the particular Business now before us.

And, *First*, as to the General Proposition its self, it is plainly grounded upon these Principles, which I shall make use of as so many Arguments to evince the Truth and Reasonableness of it.

First,

First, That common Humanity obliges us to do all the Good we possibly can to our Brethren by Nature, (d) to those who are made after the same Image of God with our selves; who have the same original Perfections, and Imperfections too; and whose Wants we cannot but know, and even feel in some Measure, by a Consciousness of the same in our selves, and a Sense of Uneasiness under them, till we have happily found a Relief and Supply for them. The universal Likeness of all Men to one another in the Essentials of a common Nature, speaks loudly for a sympathizing Regard to the most distant Partakers of it, when it is in our Power to shew it. This makes every Man a Citizen of the World, and not of one particular Place only; and it founds a near and close Relation between those Inhabitants of the Earth, who

(d) Quæ est igitur melior in hominum genere natura, quam eorum qui se natos ad homines juvandos, tutandos, conservandos, arbitrantur? *Tullii Tuscul. Quæst. Lib. 1. Cap. 14.*

Col. iii.
11.

who are the most remote from one another.

In this respect also there is neither Jew nor Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, Bond nor Free, but every Man is a Brother, and should be a Friend to every Man, as they are all derived from the same common Parent, and partake of the same common Nature. Upon this Account therefore it is highly just and reasonable that we should wish well to all Mankind, and do them all the Good we possibly can. That we should conclude, whatever we find a real Blessing to our selves, will be so to them too when they have it; and that we cannot, without being void of natural Affection, withhold it from them when it is in our Power to confer it. Nay, it is even in some Measure starving our own Bowels when we do so, and punishing our selves in others, and disowning with intolerable Pride and ill Nature the common Relation of Humanity between our selves and the rest of Mankind.

Secondly,

Secondly, The Obligation to act as the general Proposition requires, with respect to the Communicating to others a Share in those Blessings we enjoy ourselves, arises from hence also, that they are, for the most part at least, given to us by the Author of all Blessings, with this View, that we should be as willing to confer them upon others, as we are to enjoy them ourselves; and (as our blessed Saviour expressed it to his Apostles, with respect to the Gospel in particular) to give as freely as we have received: And this Consideration makes it matter of Duty and Obedience to God, as well as common Humanity, to let others partake of the Blessings we enjoy ourselves. (e) As it is the Nature of most of the Blessings God bestows upon us, that they are communicable to others, so has he all along declared it to be his Will and Pleasure, that we should communicate those that are

Matt. x.
8.

(e) Partes boni viri exsequere, alium re, alium fide, alium gratiâ, alium consilio, alium præceptis salubribus adjuva, Seneca de Beneficiis, Lib. 1. Cap. 2.

are so ; that we should not think it enough to enjoy them our selves, tho' with never so much innocent Freedom, Gratitude, and Thankfulness; but should delight in Spreading the Divine Bounty as far as ever we can, Refreshing the Souls and Bodies of other Men out of the same Fountain that we water our own, and filling *their* Hearts too *with Joy and Gladness* when our own *Corn, or Wine, or Oil increases upon us*. Nay, this is one essential part of that *Gratitude* we owe to God for any of his Blessings, which does not consist either in a bare not abusing them, or in the Praises of the Lips only, or in an inward Sense of our own particular Happiness in the Enjoyment of them ; but in a Readiness to distribute, in a Gladness to communicate, in a Zeal to make the *beneficial Light* of them *so strongly to shine upon and warm others*, that they also feeling the comfortable Virtue and enlivening Heat of them, may be moved, as well as our selves, to *glorifie our Father which is in Heaven*. This Return then of Thanks and

and Praise God expects at our Hands when he bestows any of those Blessings upon us which are in themselves communicable to others. And therefore in Obedience to him, as well as out of Compassion to our Brethren by Nature, we should never grudge them a Share in the Blessings we enjoy our selves, and the Want of which Blessings must needs be an Affliction and a Loss to them. But,

Thirdly, There is a kind of Obligation upon us all to act thus, from the *Pleasure of the Action its self*, as well as from the Ties of common Humanity, and our Duty to God. If in other Cases we are often tempted to enter upon Action by the Pleasure that naturally attends it, or at least that the Mind proposes to its self, or expects from it; (and it is not always wrong to be moved by this Principle) there is something so highly delightful in communicating Good to others, that few, who are qualified for it, would want this Addition to all their other Enjoyments, C if

if they were but once perswaded that this is the Case; that there really is such an inexpressible Pleasure, such a Spring of Joy and Contentation rising in the Soul, the Spirits overflowing so pleasingly, and the Heart swelling with such sweet Gaiety and Pride (as (f) one finely, and yet still imperfectly, expresses the delightful Passion) in doing good. But how shall we satisfy them of this? Experience is certainly the best Conviction; and they who will exercise themselves in doing good, will quickly find how joyful and pleasant a Thing it is. But in the meanwhile, the Authority of great, and especially good Men, who probably speak only what they have often felt themselves, ought to have some Weight with us in a Case of this Nature. And what then will a Christian say, when he hears his Saviour himself pronouncing that it is more blessed to give than to receive; and St. Paul using this very Maxim to the

Acts xx.
35.

the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, to encourage them to support the weak? Nay, what will any Man say, whether Christian or not, when he hears one Heathen asserting, (as even *Epicurus* (g) did) that it is not only more excellent, but more pleasant, to do Acts of Kindness, than to receive them; for nothing is so fruitful of Joy as doing good: And (h) another telling us, that a good Office is an Action that gives Joy, and receives it by giving it: These are Testimonies of those, who could hardly say these Things but upon a sensible Experience of the ineffable Pleasure of doing good. And the Argument is so suited to the general Temper of Mankind in pursuing Pleasure, that it is truly Matter of Wonder, how this Gratification of our selves, this Epicurism, if I may so call it, in one of the highest Instances of Pleasure and Delight, should be so much neglected, when it may be enjoyed without denying our
C 2 selves

(g) *Plutarch. Moral. pag. 778.* (h) *Seneca de Beneficiis, Lib. 1, C. 6.*

selves in *any other* Satisfaction that can be thought lawful and innocent. It is indeed a purely spiritual and mental Pleasure; it has nothing to do with the Body, or the animal Life of Man; it is like the Pleasure which God himself takes, when, as he speaks by the Mouth
 Jer. ix, 24. of his Prophet, *in these Things I delight, saith the Lord*; but then it must for these Reasons be agreeable to those, whose Business it is to live above the Body and the World; who are invited to tast of Pleasures that this World cannot give, any more than it can take away; for even where it is not in our Power to do, there is yet a secret and uncommon Pleasure in *wishing* well, and a sure Acceptance with God of the Heart for the Hand. For,

Fourthly and lastly, There is an Obligation of Interest, as well as of Humanity, Duty to God, and Pleasure to our selves in the Action, to determine us to communicate to others the Blessings we enjoy our selves, when we know their Wants of them, and their Want
 of

of true Happiness without them. For to be thus willing to communicate, is the most ready way to secure to our selves a lasting Possession of what we enjoy. It is like Building a Wall of Defence about our own Blessings; it is Laying up our Treasure in a secure Place, and Purchasing a never-failing Title to it. For, probably enough, those to whom we communicate a Share of what we enjoy, will not be so ungrateful as to grudge us what we still retain, but in Justice to our selves, and for our own Use; they will rather be inclined to joyn with us in Defence of the common Blessings, and with one Heart and one Hand to oppose their and our Enemies. And this is a *natural* Consequence of doing good to others, and seldom fails to be our Reward at present, but where Men are sunk into the lowest Degeneracy of Principles and Manners.

But at the same Time we have a greater Security in Almighty God himself than in Man, for the Good we do:

Since

Since he has promised that this shall be the Reward of those who do not only thankfully receive his Blessings, but chearfully communicate them to others, that they shall never want his Favour and Protection; that if they sow plentifully, they shall reap plentifully; that what they give to their Brethren, *he* will look upon as *lent* to himself, and that *he* will take Care to repay it them again; sometimes (nay, generally speaking) even here in this World, but assuredly hereafter, in full Measure, pressed down, and running over, will he give into *their* Bosoms, *who* having received his Blessings, whether spiritual or temporal here, have, out of a due Sense of their own Happiness in them, and a compassionate Feeling of their Brethrens Want of them, done all that was in their Power to make them also Partakers of the same.

And thus having laid before you the Grounds on which the General Proposition I raised from the Text is founded, I shall go on as I promised in the

Second

Second Place, to apply it to the Business now before us; which is the Propagation of the *Glorious Gospel of the blessed* 1 Tim. i. 11. God (as St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, very emphatically calls it) amongst our Brethren in the *American Parts* of the World; *beginning* with our own Countreymen, and *going on* from them to the meer Heathens, whether Natives or Slaves, the just Objects of our Pity and Compassion, because involuntarily ignorant of that Gospel, by which alone they can properly be saved. The invaluable Light and Privileges whereof we, through the exceeding Bounty of God to us, so early received, and through his amazing Patience and Forbearance have so long enjoyed, and still do enjoy, though so undeserving of it, in great Purity and Perfection. That this is a Blessing which it is in our Power to communicate to others, is evident from the Original Scheme of the Great Author of our holy Religion, which was to have his Gospel published to the whole World by the Ministry of Men;
first

first of his own more immediate Apostles, and afterwards of their Successors in the Christian Church. So that we have no Reason to think it sufficient for us to believe and obey the Gospel our selves, without being obliged, as far as it is in our Power, to communicate it to others. For as it is a Blessing, capable of being so communicated, it was no sooner conferred on one Part of the World, than it laid an Obligation on those who rejoiced in the Light of it, to publish and spread it wherever they came; as our Blessed Saviour's Apostles and first Disciples did, and sincere Christians in all Ages have thought it their Duty to do, whenever they have had an Opportunity of doing it.

For the better effecting this good Work, the Apostles and others were indeed at the Beginning (as it was absolutely necessary) endued with extraordinary Gifts and Powers by the Holy Ghost. And very probably our Forefathers in these *Western* Islands received the Gospel at first under the Influence and

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Direction of an extraordinary Power from Above. For tho' we cannot, I believe, fairly lay Claim to the immediate Instruction of a *St. Peter*, or *St. Paul* (g), or even of *Joseph of Arimathea*, (as some Ecclesiastical Writers tell us we may) yet it is certain, that by our Communication with the *Roman Empire*, we had very early Notices given us of the Saviour of the World; and do not owe our Christianity to the See of *Rome*, (much less to *Augustine* the Monk, or those who sent him hither in the *Sixth Century*) as some (for Reasons well known) would persuade us we do.

Whether the *American World* (for which we are now more immediately concerned) had these glad Tydings brought to them in those Days, either by the Apostles themselves, or any of their immediate Successors, is a Matter about which we have no certain Guide
D left

(g) However, see what Bishop *Stillington* says in his *Origines Britannicae* of the Probability of *St. Paul's* Preaching the Gospel in *Britain*.

Mat. xxiv^{14.} left to direct us, how to judge. Some
 Matt. xxviii.^{18, 19.} Passages in Scripture speak of the Preach-
 Mar. xvi.^{15.} ing of the Gospel, even in the Apostles
 Acts i. 8. Time, in such large and comprehen-
 Col. i. 6,^{23.} sive Terms, as hardly leave room for
 Rom. x.^{17.} doubting whether *they* are to be in-
 cluded or no : But then, on the other
 Hand, there are so many Difficulties
 attending the Belief of their having
then been made so happy , and these
 Expressions may so reasonably be ac-
 counted for some other Way, (as they
 have been by those who have entered
 deeper into this Argument than I in-
 tend to do) (*b*) that, upon the whole,
 it seems much more probable, that tho'
 the Gospel, and all the Benefits of it,
 were originally designed for them, as
 well as the other Parts of the World,
 yet the Time of Communicating it to
 them was not then compleatly come.
 But that the bringing *them* also into
 the Fold of Christ was to be the Work
 and the Glory of future Ages, and a
 Proof

(*b*) Vide Hermannii *Witii Miscella. sacr.* Vol. 2.
 pag. 400, &c.

Proof of the Gratitude and Compassion of those Nations, who had the Happiness of a more early Acquaintance with the Gospel of Christ, and an Obligation thereby laid upon them, to make other Nations, in due Time, as well acquainted *with*, and as happy *in* it, as themselves.

As therefore our *Civil* Acquaintance, by Trade and Commerce, with the *American* World, became more intimate and extensive, Providence seemed thereby to call upon us with a very loud and audible Voice, to begin a *Spiritual* Friendship and Commerce with them too; and to do all we could to make them Sharers with our selves in the Means of *Grace* here, in order to their being so in the Enjoyment of *Glory* hereafter.

It must not upon this Occasion be concealed, because probably it may help to stir up in us a more hearty Affection to the good Work before us, that the *Church of Rome*, as corrupt and ill-natur'd as it is in other Particulars,

has expressed a commendable Zeal in this Point, by those many Missionaries she has from Time to Time sent Abroad and employed in Converting the Heathen World to the Cross of Christ; and that before ever there appeared the least Inclination that Way in any of the Reformed Churches. But tho' she was certainly right in the Design, and may very justly reproach those, who too long neglected imitating her Example in general, yet it is much to be doubted, whether Christianity has really gained any considerable Ground in the World by all her Endeavours to spread and propagate it. And that because it is not in her Power, thro' the many Errors she is guilty of both in Doctrine and Practice, to set it in a true Light before the Eyes of those whom she designs to make Profelytes to it; any more than it is agreeable to common Sense and Reason, that the Barbarities she has sometimes used in making Converts to it, should be a likely Method of convincing the Understanding, engaging the Affections,

ctions, or conquering the Prejudices of the poor *Indians* ; who, under a very great Degeneracy of humane Nature, have yet so much of Primitive Reason and Judgment left, as to despise in their *Hearts*, what they are sometimes forced, by Extremity of Torture, to confess with their *Mouths*. But if the Church of *Rome* has so much Zeal, and is sometimes at such vast Expences for propagating a *corrupt*, and in many Particulars, a *ridiculous* Scheme of Christianity ; how shall we be able to excuse ourselves, who think, and not without Reason, that we enjoy it in its Purity and Perfection, both of Doctrine and Manners, if we shew no Zeal, no generous Inclination to communicate the Light of it where it is still wanting : if we suffer so great a Part of Mankind still to sit in *Darkness*, and under the *Shadow of Death*, when it is so much in our Power to enlighten their Minds, and lead their Feet into the *Ways of Peace*.

Moved therefore undoubtedly by Reflections of this Kind, have our Supreme

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Governours now for three Successions, encouraged by Charter, and other Ways, that good Spirit which began some Years ago to shew it self in this Nation, for propagating the Gospel of Christ among the poor *Indians* in *America*. For good Princes ever did, and ever will think it their Duty, to promote *Godlineß* as well as *Honesty*, *Religion* and *Piety* as well as *Peace* and *Happiness*, and that not only at Home, but as far as ever their Influence can fairly reach, Abroad too. And as we may well hope, that they who are now in another World, are receiving the Reward of so great a Service done to their Blessed Redeemer, as well as to their Brethren by Nature; so have we abundant Reason to promise our selves, that whatever Assistance can be given from the Throne will be given (as some has been already) by him, who now so justly possesses it, and adorns it too.

One very material Thing indeed is still wanting, and which can only come from the Throne, and that is, the Set-
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ting Spiritual Governours of the highest Order in those Countries where the Gospel is to be propagated; and which is a thing of so great Importance, upon many Accounts, that I will beg leave to say, it can hardly be neglected any longer, without infinite Prejudice to the whole Design. And therefore it is to be hoped, that they who have the Honour of Standing continually in the Presence of so great a King, and so ready to grant Favours almost before they are asked, will lay this Matter so seriously to their *own* Hearts, that *his* may be effectually moved to give a quick Dispatch to such a necessary Work as this is.

But as an Undertaking of this Nature cannot be long carried on, at least in the ordinary Methods of Proceeding, without a *continued Fund* of charitable Contributions, and a *persevering Zeal* in those who are truly Friends to it, there is still every Day more and more Occasion for all the Help that can be given it; for our following cheerfully the good Example
our

our Superiours have set us ; and abounding in the Riches of our Liberality towards it ; and in our Zeal for still going on, whatever Opposition or Discouragement we may meet with. Many, no doubt, are and will be the Enemies of a Work of this Nature ; some by Mistaking the true Design of it, as if not Christianity its self, but the Faith and Practice of one Community only of Christians was to be propagated among the Heathens. Now if that Faith and Practice be what is required and allowed of by the Gospel, I cannot see where the Fault would be, if this were intended, in a sincere Subordination to the more general Design of Propagating the Gospel its self. But as no such particular Design is mentioned in our Charter, which is given us for the Propagation of the *Gospel in General in Foreign Parts*, this is the End we ought principally to propose to our selves, and is, I hope, sincerely pursued by all who are concerned in this great Trust, for the Good of Mankind. Some again there
are,

are, who oppose this good Work, for fear of losing their Slaves, and the Authority they have assumed over them, upon their being made Christians. A Fear *as unreasonable*, if by Slaves they only mean such Servants as one Christian ought to make of another, *as it is barbarous* if they mean any thing more. Others, it is to be feared, do all they can to discountenance a Work of this Nature, in Contempt and Hatred of that Religion its self which is to be propagated by this Society. They are *Enemies*, as the Apostle calls them, to *the Cross of Christ*; they first reject the *Counsel of God against their own Souls*, and then spare no Pains to hinder others from *Entering into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Nay, even Satan himself, alarmed as it were at his Danger, and the approaching Loss of so many Millions of Subjects, if our Endeavours should succeed, has very probably of late *desired to have us, that he might sift us as Wheat*, that our Faith might fail, our Charity grow cool, our Zeal languish

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in the Prosecution of this Work. So that we have many Enemies to contend with and overcome. But if we are not wanting to our selves, we need not fall, nor even be discouraged, tho' in such a Day of Trial as this is. He whose Cause we are pleading in these Labours of Love for our Brethren, will stand by us and support us, and pray for us unto his Heavenly Father, *that our Faith fail not*; He will still enable us to go on cheerfully in this good Work of Confirming some, and Converting others of our Brethren, and make us the happy Instruments of *adding daily to the Church such as shall be saved.*

And who can tell whether, as dark and melancholy as the present Face of Things may be, yet that Day, that glorious Day may not even now be drawing on, when the *Fulness of the Gentiles is to come in*; when the whole
 Gal. iv. 4. *Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*
 Ifai. xi. 9. When, in the Words of the Prophet
 Mal. i. 11. *Malachi, from the rising up of the Son,*
 unto

unto the going down of the same, God's Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every Place Incense shall be offered unto it, and a pure Offering: That good Spirit which has of late appeared in this, and other Countries, for Enlarging the Borders of the Christian Church, seems to be a Forerunner of such a spiritual Revolution in the World, when all the Kingdoms of it shall become the Kingdoms of our Saviour Christ; and all the Kindreds of the Nations shall worship before him. ^{Psalm. xxii. 27.} But whether the Time be so near or no; how should every sincere Christian long for it? How ready and glad should we find him, to be in in the least degree an Instrument of Hastening its Coming? It is very probable, that the Scheme of Providence in this Great Event is so laid, that the only Humane way to accelerate the Meeting of the whole World in one common Faith, under one Head and Saviour, is to look with a compassionate and tender Eye on the Infidel part of it, and to set heartily about

the Work of Converting Heathens to the Cross of Christ. For tho' God may probably, in the Conduct of this Scene of Providence relating to the full Vocation of the Gentiles, make some miraculous Displays of his Power, for the more effectual compleating it; yet that he will in a great measure act in that, as he does in other Branches of his Government of the World, by second and ordinary Causes, is a Supposition neither incredible nor disagreeable to the constant Method of his Providence. Think then with yourselves what the Pleasure may possibly one Day be, in Reflecting on your own Share in so glorious, so beneficial a Work to Mankind, that when you was called upon to promote it, you did not decline the Service on any narrow selfish Principles; but being moved with a hearty Zeal for the Honour of your Blessed Saviour, and a tender Compassion towards your ignorant, enslaved, and consequently most unhappy Brethren, you cheerfully put your Hand

Hand to the Plough, and, according to your Abilities, contributed something to open their Eyes, and to turn ^{Act. xxvi. 18.} them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God. That they, as well as your selves, might receive Forgiveness of Sins, and an Inheritance among those who are sanctified by Faith that is in Christ.

Blessed be God, that so many have already appeared, by their liberal Benefactions, to have this Matter truly at Heart; their Names highly deserve an Honourable Recital here, if the Time would permit, or their good Deeds were not recorded to much better Advantage, in the Annual Accounts of our Proceedings. There you will see (and, I doubt not, to your Satisfaction) what Success has hitherto attended this good Work, and by whose Help and generous Contributions it still goes on prosperously, and I hope will shine more and more unto the perfect Day; which undoubtedly it will, if all who are able, be but as willing, to join in it. And now
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certainly, if ever, is it a proper Time for us to be thus willing, when we cannot (if we reflect at all) but observe with Shame and Confusion of Face, the Vanity and Folly of trusting in uncertain Riches, of laying up Treasure on Earth, and not being rich towards God. We have seen with Astonishment enough what this Wisdom of the World at last ends in; what Disappointments, what Losses, what Shame, what fearful Desolation it has brought on many Families, I might almost say on a whole Nation, nay, even on more Nations than one, in a very short Time. To how much better Account, even in our Worldly Affairs, would it in all Probability have turned, if our Zeal and our Labours had been employed but half as earnestly in such a Work as this now before us, as it was lately in heaping up to our selves the Mammon of Unrighteousness.

Whilst therefore our Minds are tenderly affected either with our *own*, or *others* Losses, with the Anguish of what

is upon us, and the Fear of what *may be coming* to us, and few perhaps can be totally excused from some Degree of the Love of the World during the late Frenzy of the Nation; let us take this Opportunity of reflecting with our selves, How much we have been in the Wrong; How little we have considered what became us as Christians; How justly God has punished us by our own Folly; and how much Reason we have to sin no more after the same Manner, least a worse Judgment (and a worse we know is abroad in the Earth) happen to us: To prevent which sore Addition to our present Distress, nothing is more likely than a hearty Zeal for the Honour of God, and the Good of Mankind in general, than *remembering* (in the Words of our Blessed Saviour himself to the Church of *Ephesus*) from Rev. ii. 5. *whence we are fallen, and repenting, and doing our first Work of Love.* This may save a Nation, even at the Brink of Ruine, which I hope is not our Case yet, as evil as the Days are.

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40 *A Sermon before the Society, &c.*

Whatever therefore we have preserved from the common Shipwrack, let us devote some part of it to Works of Charity; and (if Preference may be given to any) to *this* now before us, which is of so beneficial, so extensive a Nature; and which cannot but be a Sacrifice of our Substance, a Service of our Souls acceptable to God, as it

² Cor. ix. 12. is an *Administration* that will supply the *Spiritual Wants*, and undoubtedly be abundant also in the *Thanksgivings* of many unto God.

F I N I S.



